Teachers sue plant for leaks

By TIM MOLLOY
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Teachers at an elementary school sued a chrome plating plant located across the street, saying years of chemical leaks have caused cancer, brain damage and at least one death.

The lawsuit, filed Tuesday by about 15 teachers, their families and residents who live near 28th Street Elementary School, says Palace Plating has illegally released chemicals including Chromium-6, a carcinogen also known as hexavalent chromium.

One of the plaintiffs, Sylvia Munoz, has been plagued with health problems including asthma, bronchitis and high blood pressure since she began teaching at the school 18 years ago, said her husband, Joseph Sena. Now their children have serious health problems as well, he said.

“I have a 14-year-old who is mentally retarded. I have a 7-year-old who has autism. And we just recently found out that our third child who is 6 has it also,” he said. “We want to shut that company down. We want them to move on, away from schools.”

The company did not return a call for comment Wednesday.

The lawsuit, which seeks unspecified damages, said at least one woman had died from exposure to contaminants. Her heirs were among the plaintiffs.

The plant opened in 1941 across from the school, which has been in the South Los Angeles neighborhood since 1896.